

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199603442**

**Boeing Co
B737**

14 October 1996

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number:	199603442	Occurrence Type:	Incident
Location:	10km SE Melbourne, Aerodrome		
State:	VIC	Inv Category:	4
Date:	Monday 14 October 1996		
Time:	1430 hours	Time Zone	EST
Highest Injury Level:	None		

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Boeing Co		
Aircraft Model:	737-376		
Aircraft Registration:	VH-TAJ	Serial Number:	23484
Type of Operation:	Air Transport High Capacity Passenger		
Damage to Aircraft:	Nil		
Departure Point:	Perth WA		
Departure Time:			
Destination:	Melbourne VIC		

Approved for Release: Wednesday, June 11, 1997

FACTUAL INFORMATION

The crew of a B737, en route from Perth to Melbourne, requested an arrival on runway 34 after receiving the automatic terminal information service (ATIS) information 'W', which indicated that runway 27 was available for arrivals and runway 34 was available for departures. During the period between the crew receiving the ATIS and requesting runway 34, the aerodrome information changed. The latest ATIS information 'V', which the crew copied, indicated that Melbourne aerodrome was operating on runway 27 for departures and runway 16 for arrivals. The crew was advised that runway 34 was not available, due to the operations on runway 16, and was assigned a standard arrival route (STAR) clearance and runway 16. The crew did not hear the assigned runway because of radio interference and requested confirmation from the sector controller that the runway was 27. The sector controller replied that runway 27 was the assigned runway. The sector controller annotated runway 27 on the flight progress strip for the aircraft. The crews of subsequent aircraft were assigned runway 16 by the sector controller.

The crew of the B737 had not advised the sector controller of the code and receipt of the ATIS, nor had the controller verified that the crew had received the latest ATIS.

When the non duty runway was assigned, the controller was required to annotate the "ops data" line of the aircraft's label on the radar display with the assigned runway. The "ops data" line for the B737 was not annotated with runway 27. Once the runway and the arrival clearance had been issued by the sector controller, there were no further checks to confirm the aircraft's arrival clearance or assigned runway.

The crew had previously requested track shortening and thought that the sector controller was actioning this request by assigning a runway which required fewer track miles to run to a landing. The crew transferred to approach control and continued to track in accordance with the cleared route. Overhead Essendon aerodrome, the crew continued to track eastwards for a left base to runway 27. The approach controller was expecting the B737 to turn left, to the north, for a left base to runway 16. The approach controller cancelled the standard arrival route and radar vectored the B737 for runway 16. As the B737 approached the centreline of runway 27, the crew requested from the controller the runway to which the aircraft was being radar vectored. The approach controller advised them that the vectors were for runway 16. The aircraft landed on runway 16. There was no breakdown of separation.

ANALYSIS

Initially, the sector controller issued the correct STAR and runway to the crew of the B737. However, when the crew queried the assigned runway, the controller replied with the incorrect runway and then annotated the flight progress strip with the wrongly assigned runway. The reason for the controller assigning the incorrect runway and not amending the "ops data" line of the label could not be determined.

The crew of the B737 did receive the latest ATIS but believed that the sector controller was providing them with their previously requested track shortening by assigning them runway 27. Consequently, they did not query the runway assignment with the Approach controller.

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS

1. The controller did not confirm that the crew of the B737 had received the latest ATIS.
2. The sector controller did not confirm the arrival runway, as indicated in the latest ATIS, when queried by the crew.
3. The sector controller did not amend the "ops data" line of the B737's label on the radar display with the assignment of the non duty runway.

